

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-05

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DRAFTED BY:NEA/IAI:HHSTACKHOUSE

APPROVED BY:NEA/IAI:HHSTACKHOUSE

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R 031751Z OCT 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 195522

FOL TELSENT ACTION BEIRUT, INFO ROME & GENEVA FROM
STATE 02 OCT 73 REPEATED TO YOU

QTE C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 195522

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, LE, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN JEWS IN LEBANON

1. SUBJECT OF SYRIAN JEWS WHO HAVE ESCAPED TO LEBANON AND
ARE UNABLE TO ACQUIRE EXIT VISAS IS ATTRACTING INCREASING
ATTENTION IN US. THERE IS
CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN THIS QUESTION AND STORIES ABOUT
SYRIAN JEWS TRAPPED IN LEBANON HAVE BEGUN TO APPEAR IN
PRESS.

2. DEPARTMENT'S UNDERSTANDING, BASED ON CONTACTS WITH
JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS AND CONCERNED AGENCIES, IS THAT
THERE ARE PRESENTLY SOME 75-80 SYRIAN JEWS IN BEIRUT WHO
ARE UNABLE TO DEPART LEBANON BECAUSE THEY CANNOT OBTAIN
EXIT VISAS. SOME HAVE BEEN IN LEBANON SINCE APRIL; MANY
ARE LIVING IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES AND FEAR CAPTURE BY
SYRIANS OR FEDAYEEN.

3. IT OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT PRIOR TO APRIL OF THIS YEAR
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SYRIAN JEWS WHO ESCAPED TO LEBANON (ENTERING COUNTRY IL-

LEGALLY) COULD GENERALLY OBTAIN AN EXIT VISA BY SPENDING A MONTH IN PRISON. LEBANESE APPLIED THIS REGULATION IN NON-DISCRIMINATORY MANNER TO ALL PERSONS ENTERING COUNTRY ILLEGALLY. SINCE THE SPRING, HOWEVER, IT APPARENTLY HAS BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR SYRIAN JEWS TO OBTAIN EXIT PERMIT FROM LEBANON, EVEN IF WILLING TO GO TO JAIL. THIS SEEMING CHANGE IN POLICY, WHICH APPEARS TO COINCIDE WITH ISRAELI RAID INTO BEIRUT, HAS CREATED BACKLOG OF SYRIAN JEWS IN LEBANON AND GENERATED INCREASING PRESSURES TO GET THEM OUT.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY IS REQUESTED CONFIRM WHETHER LEBANESE HAVE, IN FACT, CHANGED THEIR POLICY REGARDING EXIT VISAS FOR PEOPLE ENTERING COUNTRY ILLEGALLY. IF THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE, ON WHAT LEGAL GROUNDS IS IT BASED? EMBASSY SHOULD TAKE THIS MATTER UP AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL WITH GOL WITH VIEW TO SEEKING GOL AGREEMENT TO ISSUE EXIT VISAS TO JEWS CURRENTLY STRANDED IN LEBANON. KISSINGER UNQTE KISSINGER

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